

St John's Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104920
Local Authority	Sefton
Inspection number	336386
Inspection dates	15–16 July 2010
Reporting inspector	Garry Jones

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	132
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr P Baker
Headteacher	Mr Richard Miller
Date of previous school inspection	1 May 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They observed 11 lessons taught by seven teachers. Meetings were held with staff, the vice-chair of the governing body, a representative of the local authority and groups of pupils. The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at pupils' assessment records, the minutes of meetings of the governing body, the school improvement plan, records of external evaluations and a range of school policies, including those related to safeguarding. In addition, questionnaires from 31 parents and carers were reviewed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the progress of pupils, particularly in English
- the consistency of the quality of teaching and assessment
- the effectiveness of systems for the monitoring and evaluation of provision
- the quality of care, support and guidance provided.

Information about the school

This is a smaller than average size school. A very large majority of the pupils are of White British origin and the number of children from minority ethnic communities is well below the national average. There are few pupils with English as an additional language or at an early stage of English language acquisition. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is in line with average and there are currently no children with a statement for special educational needs. The school has the Healthy Schools award, the Sports Activemark and silver ECO status.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school that has improved significantly since its previous inspection. It has a warm and friendly atmosphere. The overwhelming majority of parents and carers who completed the inspection questionnaire value the school highly. Pupils speak enthusiastically about their school and are proud of their achievements.

The care, guidance and support that are provided for the pupils are outstanding. All the pupils spoken to and those who completed the inspection questionnaire believe that the adults in the school care about them and that they have someone to turn to if they have difficulties. The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils are polite and courteous to each other, staff and visitors. Pupils feel very safe within the school and enjoy their learning. Their social, moral and spiritual awareness are outstanding, but their knowledge of other cultures and communities is less well developed. They have an excellent understanding of how to stay healthy. The large majority of pupils attend regularly, but there are a very few who are persistently absent. In such a small school this has a significant impact on the attendance figure, but it remains average.

Pupils attain standards that are above average at the end of Key Stage 2. The standards in English are not as high as in mathematics and science, but are also above average. When their starting points on entry to the school are taken into account, pupils make good progress in all subjects. The good progress that pupils make reflects teaching that is good. In some lessons, the progress is particularly rapid because of the enthusiasm engendered in the pupils by exciting problem solving activities. This effective strategy is not used sufficiently in all subjects. The curriculum is good. It meets the needs of pupils well and is enriched with a series of exciting events to introduce topics. These include visits and visitors which capture the interest of the pupils. The curriculum is also strengthened by the wide range of extra-curricular activities that is provided. Many of these activities lead to accreditation through the Children's University.

The school is well led by an effective senior team. The commitment of the headteacher to delegating responsibilities to all staff has resulted in a strong sense of shared purpose and a clear focus on improvement. There is effective self-evaluation that identifies areas for development, including the need to extend initiatives for community cohesion to a wider range of communities beyond the local area. The school is supported by a knowledgeable governing body that is not afraid to challenge the school to do better. The strong commitment to development, together with the clear improvements to standards, progress and to the quality of provision since the previous inspection, indicate that there is good capacity for further improvement.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the rate of progress and raise achievement by sharing the good practice within the school to increase the use of investigative and problem solving activities in lessons.
- Enhance the contribution to community cohesion and the pupils' awareness of other cultures by providing opportunities for them to experience working with pupils from other faiths and backgrounds.
- Raise levels of attendance further by working closely with the families of those few pupils who are persistently absent.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

The achievement of pupils and their enjoyment of learning are good. Pupils enter the Reception class with skills that are generally well below the expectations for their age. They make good progress, particularly in Key Stage 2, to attain standards that are well above average by the end of Year 6. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels in the national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 is above the national average and is particularly high in mathematics and science. The progress made by all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities is good. In lessons, pupils display genuine interest in and enthusiasm for their learning and, as a result, make good progress. They are keen to do well and show that they have the skills to work independently and in groups. When applying themselves to problem solving activities in mathematics, science and in information and communication technology (ICT) they work diligently, sharing their ideas and reviewing their results in a mature manner.

The overwhelming majority of pupils enjoy school. They are proud of their school and are keen to contribute to its development. They pursue ideas for improvement through their four school councils, for example in the development of a woodland walk to improve the school grounds. Other pupils willingly take on responsibilities around school, for example as play leaders for the younger pupils. The provision of a wide range of play equipment to encourage physical activity and good health was spoken of with genuine pride and enthusiasm. They are also keen to contribute to the wider community through musical and sporting events and through charity fund raising. During the inspection, the school was enjoying a visit from the headteacher of a school in Sierra Leone, for which the pupils have raised funds. Pupils are well prepared for the next stages in their education because of their good basic skills, including those in ICT, their excellent social skills and their determination to do well.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The quality of the teaching in the school is good. Lessons are well planned with clear learning objectives, although on occasion these could be more precise in defining the outcomes expected for pupils. The planning takes good account of the pupils' previous learning to ensure that the level of challenge is appropriate. Teachers organise a good range of activities that interest the pupils and enable them to make good progress. The pace of learning is brisk and pupils with identified learning difficulties are well supported by teaching assistants. In the best lessons, learning was very good because pupils had been provided with exciting opportunities to investigate problems collaboratively. Pupils have targets and are aware of what they need to do to improve. Their work is assessed regularly and they are given advice on how to improve either verbally or through written comments.

The curriculum is broad and balanced and is well designed to deliver the statutory requirements. Pupils are effectively grouped according to their ability when required. The curriculum has been revised effectively to develop a more creative approach to the teaching of subjects through themes and topics. Each class has an engaging theme they return to throughout the year in addition to a number of shorter topics. A creative example was the Year 3 study of values by producing an animated cartoon. This involved the pupils working in teams for a day to develop their writing skills, create models and to use ICT to record the animation. This produced real enthusiasm and the pace of learning was good. There is a very good range of enrichment and extra-curricular activities and rates of participation are high.

The strategies for care, guidance and support are of very high quality. The staff know

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the pupils very well and monitor their well-being carefully. There is a calm and welcoming learning environment in which pupils can thrive. The school deals with transition very effectively. There are very good links with nursery providers and with high schools. The support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is highly developed. Their progress is monitored carefully and additional support is provided both internally and through other agencies as required. An informal support group for their parents and carers aids communication. Those pupils who, because of their circumstances, are most vulnerable and their parents and carers are supported very well. A parent support adviser is available to work with families, and appropriate use of external agencies is extremely well coordinated. The school has pursued an innovative range of strategies to meet the needs of such pupils, including a link with nearby stables to develop confidence and self-esteem through working with horses.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

There is a clear focus on bringing about improvement, which is shared by the senior leadership team, the staff and the governing body. The school has, since the previous inspection, put in place robust procedures for monitoring outcomes and provision that involve all middle leaders. The process of self-evaluation is rigorous and accurately identifies strengths and areas for improvement. This informs the school improvement plan that is a useful tool for improvement. There is a clear focus on staff development that has brought about improvements to teaching. There is a strong commitment to equality of opportunity, and the achievement and participation of all groups of pupils is monitored closely. The impact of this is evident in the improved attainment of boys and in the good progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school has completed an audit of community needs and implemented strategies to develop community cohesion. This has had the greatest impact on the local community and at the international level, with progress on developing links with other communities in this country being at an earlier stage of development. There is a strong commitment to safeguarding pupils. Procedures are effective and conform to current government recommendations.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the Reception Year with skills that are generally well below those expected at their age. They settle well within the safe environment and make good progress so that at the end of the year their skills are broadly in line with those expected for their age. Progress is good in developing basic and social skills; children develop real confidence and are well prepared for the next stage in their learning. The quality of provision is good. Activities are planned carefully to provide a good balance of child-initiated and adult-led activities. There are a good range of resources available and effective use is made of the outdoor area. Robust systems are in place for assessing and recording the progress of the children. The facility is well organised. The quality of provision is reviewed regularly and plans put in place for improvement when required.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account: Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Most parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire are happy with

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the quality of education provided within the school and the way in which the school meets their child's needs. Inspectors agree that this is a good school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St John's Church of England Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 31 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 132 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	24	77	6	19	1	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	25	81	6	19	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	16	52	13	42	1	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	20	65	10	32	1	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	18	58	12	39	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	15	48	14	45	2	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	17	55	13	42	1	3	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	18	58	12	39	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	18	58	11	35	1	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	15	48	15	48	1	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	10	32	19	61	1	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	16	52	14	45	1	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	22	71	7	23	1	3	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



19 July 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St John's Church of England Primary School, Liverpool, L22 9RG

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave to me when I recently inspected your school. I enjoyed talking to you about your work and listening to your views.

St John's is a good school. It has improved well since its previous inspection. You attain standards by the end of Year 6 that are above those found nationally. This shows that you all make good progress. This is because of the good teaching you receive and the well planned range of courses and activities that are organised for you. Your behaviour is excellent. You know really well how to stay safe and healthy. Your social skills are very well developed and you know the difference between right and wrong. You have a clear understanding of Christianity, but your knowledge of other faiths and cultures is not as good. You are extremely well looked after by the staff and if you need additional help that is organised well.

Your school is well led and there are clear plans for it to improve. I have agreed with the headteacher and the governors that they should increase the range of opportunities that you have to do exciting problem solving activities. I saw how much you enjoyed this type of work in science, mathematics and when Year 3 produced their animated cartoon. I have also suggested that you should have more opportunities for working with pupils from other cultures and faiths. Finally, I have asked the school to work with the few of you who do not attend enough to raise your attendance. You can all help the school by continuing to behave well and attend regularly.

Best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Garry Jones

Lead Inspector

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